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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4644
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 5308
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 5577
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0753
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 3585
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 4935
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0877
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2372
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KATHMANDU 000188

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2017

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SUBJECT: PARTY LEADERS CONCERNED ABOUT A MAOIST DEPUTY
PRIME MINISTER

Classified By: Ambassador James F. Moriarty. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

11. (C) In separate meetings January 22, 23 and 26, Nepali Congress-Democratic (NC-D) President Sher Bahadur Deuba, Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) Chairman Pashupati Shumsher Rana, and Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) General Secretary Madhav Kumar Nepal all told the Ambassador that they were worried about the prospect of a Maoist Deputy Prime Minister. All three said a solution needed to be found to prevent a Maoist from becoming Prime Minister should something happen to current Prime Minister Koirala. Deuba and MK Nepal agreed that Koirala had to prevent a Maoist from becoming his heir apparent. Concerning recent unrest in Nepal's Terai region, MK Nepal said the minorities had to be engaged in dialogue. Rana complained that the Maoists and the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) were obstructing his party. Both Rana and MK Nepal predicted the demise of the monarchy and the imminent end of King Gyanendra's reign. MK Nepal complained that the arms management process was moving too slowly, and assured the Ambassador that CPN-UML would insist that arms management be credible and complete before the Maoists were allowed to join the Interim Government.

Deuba Baffled That CPN-UML Agreed to A Maoist Deputy PM

12. (C) NC-D Party leader Sher Bahadur Deuba told the Ambassador January 22 that he did not know why the CPN-UML Party had agreed to give the Deputy Prime Minister position to the Maoists. Asked if he thought the CPN-UML wanted to protect the House Speaker seat, Deuba said, "No one cares about the speaker seat. It is not important." Deuba agreed that it would be "a mess" if the sole Deputy PM were a Maoist and Prime Minister Koirala died. He noted that in effect, that would result in handing power to the Maoists, because, under the Interim Constitution, the Interim Parliament could not come into session unless the Prime Minister called for it. "The Prime Minister has no moral obligation, nor accountability," to resolve our current problems, he underlined, lamenting that there was currently "no order and no one to protect us." PM Koirala was failing to address the

nation's problems.

13. (C) On January 23, RPP Chairman Pashupati Shumsher Rana intimated to the Ambassador that he was worried about the prospect of a Maoist Deputy Prime Minister. He was convinced that the Maoists would not agree to amend the Interim Constitution to prevent the Deputy PM from taking power should the Prime Minister resign or die. Rana indicated that it was urgent to appoint a second Deputy PM who would outrank the Maoist appointee. CPN-UML General Secretary MK Nepal stated January 26 that the prospect of a Maoist Deputy Prime Minister was "very dangerous," although he said the Maoists had told him that they had no interest in holding the Prime Minister position at this time. MK Nepal agreed that the Deputy Prime Minister should not be allowed to become Prime Minister automatically. "There must be a two-thirds majority in the Parliament," he articulated, claiming that the CPN-UML would be in favor of amending the Interim Constitution to ensure that a majority, and not a "consensus," would be required by the Interim Parliament.

Koirala Must Act

14. (C) Deuba remarked that he would tell Prime Minister Koirala that the SPA had not agreed to give the Deputy Prime Minister spot to the Maoists, conceding that it would be important to discuss the possibility of the Prime Minister's untimely death with Koirala himself. Deuba was confident, however, that the CPN-UML would not agree to allow a Maoist dictatorship, and that a solution would be found, adding that he would address the issue with CPN-UML leaders. Deuba said he would suggest to the Indian Ambassador that he should "speak strongly" to Koirala, indicating that the Indians

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could "stop this thing." MK Nepal expressed frustration that PM Koirala refused to "think about the future" or discuss what would happen in the event of his death. He said PM Koirala's problem was that he "doesn't talk," and complained that the Nepali Congress (NC) Party wanted to look good to Maoist Chairman Prachanda.

Madhesi/Minority Dissatisfaction

15. (C) MK Nepal noted that recent unrest among the Madhesis in the Terai region could be attributed to the Maoist offshoot group Terai Janatantrik Mukti Morcha (JTMM), and that its motives might have been to show that a multi-party democracy and the current government were incapable of giving peace to the people. When the Ambassador suggested that the Interim Parliament could reassure the Madhesis by promising that the Constituent Assembly would take the legitimate concerns of Madhesis into account, MK Nepal responded that the Interim Parliament should engage all the minority groups in dialogue. "We must address them properly, and give them their due," he asserted. He added that all parties of the Parliament needed to be taken into account, not just the SPA and the Maoists, claiming, "The 'eight party' phase is over."

Maoists Obstructing RPP's Work

16. (C) Rana complained that the Maoists were keeping the minority RPP from re-establishing their offices and campaigning in the country-side. The SPA was also being obstructionist, he said, keeping the RPP out of discussions about re-establishing the local government. Rana requested that the U.S. push the Nepali Congress and the Prime Minister to include the RPP in local government structures.

No One Can Save the King

17. (C) Turning to the monarchy, Rana opined that King

Gyanendra was making the same mistakes as his brother Birendra and grandfather before him, and that he had not shown a willingness to change course in light of recent events. Rana said he believed that the King would be the last of his dynasty to rule Nepal. MK Nepal noted that the monarchy had brought Nepal to its current state of unrest. "As we've seen in other countries, the monarchy is responsible for its own revolution. No one can save King Gyanendra now," averred the CPN-UML leader.

The Arms Management Process Moving Too Slowly

18. (C) MK Nepal asserted that the arms management and People's Liberation Army (PLA) combatant registration process was moving too slowly, noting that it should be done in a straightforward, non-bureaucratic way. "The Maoists must share responsibility and face the people," he said, adding that it was important to have the process complete well before June when Constituent Assembly elections were scheduled to be held. He remarked that he would talk to UN Special Representative to the Secretary General Ian Martin about the progress of the arms management process. Pressed by the Ambassador on what the CPN-UML would do if the number of Maoist weapons turned in was inadequate, MK Nepal responded that the party would insist that the Maoists turn in a verifiable and satisfactory amount of weapons. If not, they would not be allowed to join the Interim Government, he assured the Ambassador.

Comment

19. (C) While all three party leaders expressed concern over the prospect of a Maoist Deputy Prime Minister, no one had a clear plan of how to solve it. Post believes that either a second Deputy Prime Minister, who outranks the Maoist Deputy PM, must be appointed, or the Interim Constitution must be amended to require a vote in the Interim Parliament on

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appointment of a new Prime Minister in the event of the death or incapacitation of the current one. While the CPN-UML leader conceded that the Madhesis and other minority groups must be engaged in dialogue, no leaders have stated that the complaints of the Madhesis would be addressed by the Constituent Assembly. Post believes that the best practice would be to set up processes in the Constituent Assembly to take these concerns into account. The current unrest is a good opportunity for the parties to face these issues head on and draft a better Constitution that addresses the rights of all disadvantaged groups, including Madhesis, Janajatis, Dalits and women.

MORIARTY